CD 2013--13-14

In The Dead of Winter

U of T Composer Concert #3

February 5th 2013



7:30pm Walter Hall

Edward Johnson Building

Featuring New Works by Living Composers

A message to all Cell Phone Users and this means most of you here: **At the beginning of this programme you will be asked to turn your cell phones OFF!!! This does NOT mean turn them on 'Silent' or 'Vibrate'. This means turn them *OFF!*** You may think texting during the concert is harmless but it is in fact a big problem. Why is this, do you say? Well, composers put a lot of work into a piece and at this stage of their careers, said piece may only be played once or twice. **Your cell phone sends a wireless signal that interferes with the recording equipment used in Walter Hall. This means that hiss, pops, clicks, and other undesirable noise can be present on a recording and this is as a result of** your cell phone. **In extreme cases, it can render a recording absolutely unusable.**

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE turn off your cell phones!!!!

Thank you. Big Daddy

Biographies

Kieran Anson-Cartwright is in his 3rd year of the undergraduate composition program and is currently studying with Christos Hatzis.

Kirk Chau is a 4th year composition major who has studied with Chan Ka Nin and Norbert Palej.

Sean Goldman is a second year undergraduate student at the University of Toronto music faculty. He has been playing classical piano since the age of five. Despite Goldman's classical upbringing, his compositional practice started in the pop genre and gradually evolved, shifting into a new realm of written music. He listens to a large variety of artists and genres, taking influence from composers such as Ann Southam, Thom Yorke and Steve Reich. His compositional goals focus on writing interesting music that can still be pleasant to listen to for people who are relatively unfamiliar with the Modern Classical genre. With this in mind, Goldman is constantly attempting to reach a balance between complexity and audibility. He also enjoys blueberry pie and long walks on the beach. This is the first time Goldman has had something performed in a student composer concert.

Kevin Zi-Xiao He is a Chinese-born composer who immigrated to Canada in his mid-teen years. He's musical output comes from his background in traditional as well as popular music of China and, thus, embodies Eastern musical elements within the Western classical framework and defies boundaries between popular and art music. He's composition demonstrates strong melodic sense and poetic use of tonal harmony that evokes instant emotional response in the audience. Zi-Xiao He has studied composition with Larysa Kuzmenko and Ronald Royer. His works have been performed by the Orchestra of the Chinese Artists Society of Toronto under the direction of Dr. Erhei Liang. He is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree with double-majoring in music and architectural design at the University of Toronto.

Tze Yeung Ho, a Norwegian-Chinese composer, was born on April 30, 1992 in Oslo, Norway. He currently resides in Toronto, Canada and studies composition at the University of Toronto. Three years prior to his studies at the university, he had private composition instructions from the well-established Canadian composer, Dr. Alexander 'Sasha' Weinstangel. Tze Yeung has also worked with other Canadian composers such as Maria Molinari and Andrew Staniland in various composition workshops held in the Canadian Music Centre. As well, Tze Yeung held a position as assistant copyist in Eighth Note Publications in Markham, Canada. He currently studies composition under Gary Kulesha.

Born in the United States, **Patrick McGraw** immigrated to Canada in 2001. He earned a Ph.D in theoretical physics from Caltech in 1996, but subsequently returned to school to study music composition. He earned his MA from York University in 2010 and is currently a DMA student at the University of Toronto where he is studying with Gary Kulesha and has also studied with Alexander Rapoport.

Babak Taghinia is currently in his second year at U of T studying Classical Guitar performance under Jeffrey McFadden. As an aspiring composer, Babak's pieces cover a wide array of genres and ensembles but with a greater focus on works for solo instruments, the guitar in particular, and small chamber ensembles.

Parisa Sabet is an Iranian composer currently lives in Toronto. Her works cover broad variety of acoustic, electro-acoustic and film music. Sabet's compositions have a unique and lyrical quality that stems out of blending elements of Eastern and Western's musical languages. She completed her bachelor of music degree in composition at the Chicago College of Performing Arts and is pursuing her master's degree in composition at the University of Toronto where she studies in the studio of Christos Hatzis. She received her first bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts at BIHE (Baha'i Institute for Higher Education) in 2005. Sabet's solo alto flute piece, Nay Nava, won the 2011 Timothy Munro (eighth blackbird's flutist) Solo Flute Competition in conjunction with the CCPA composition program. In addition, her piece, Nawruz, was selected for the 2011 Chicago College of Performing Art's Wind Ensemble Composition Contest. Nawruz has also been broadcast on Chicago's Classical and folk Music Radio

Kenzie Yango is a second year comprehensive voice student, aspiring to be a theory major and comp minor. He wants to combine medias and often creates music to series of images in his head. In the future, he hopes to utilize this to start a career in film, television, and videogame composing.

Programme

Litany

Patrick McGraw

Nathan Petitpas, marimba
Tyler Versluis, piano

3:2 for Solo Piano

Kieran Anson-Cartwright b.1992

Nick Nolan, piano

The Ups and Downs of Domination: for Piano

Kenzie Yango b.1992

Chanelle Tseng, Piano

Shadows and Light

Jordan O'Connor b. 1972
Jeff Cotton, Double Bass
Robert Best, Piano

Trio for Piano, Violin and Horn in D Major

Kevin Zi-Xiao He b. 1991

David Debono, Piano
Tania Cheng, Violin
Natalie Worden, Horn in F

~*Intermission*~

Arghavan for two pianos

Parisa Sabet

Jialiang Zhu, Piano
Pei-chen Chen, Piano

Three Perpetual States

i. Happiness At Its Least Apprehensive
ii. Too Many Dreams That Aren't Real
iii. Tango With Apathy

Sean Goldman b. 1993

Abby Zhang, Piano

Trembles: for solo Classical Guitar

Babak Taghinia b.1993

Babak Taghinia, Classical Guitar

The Lunacy of Tranquility

Kirk Chau, b. 1990

Nick Nolan, Piano

Sonatina for Bb Clarinet and Piano

Tze Yeung Ho b.1992

Omar Ho, Bb Clarinet
Jennifer Liu, Piano

Program Notes

Arghavan in Persian language is referred to a dark-red tree that has a cold and dry nature. Originally, I planned out Arghavan as a set of variations for two pianos that would present different aspects of the theme. However, the theme never found its way to even the first variation. I was left with no choice other than following the direction that the music was taking me.

The first movement portrays the characteristic of the color red by building up a lot of energy and tension while moving towards a big crescendo. The second movement portrays the dark side of the color of Arghavan. The energy and tension that was built in the first movement calms down in the second movement with the introduction of a new musical idea. This new idea opens up slowly throughout the second movement by the constant invitation and insistent of a second voice.

The **Ups and Downs of Domination: for Piano:** Everyone understands the power thirsty crave that drives them insane when they come across a hoard of flying narwhals. (Is that just me?) This piece is the soundtrack to the gamer's frustrations of repetitive conflicts they must push through in order to get off the couch. With this song, I wanted to create a driving battle simulation feel that would abruptly stop in order to build back up again until the "game" was finished, and the highlights (musical motifs) became just memories. Effectively, I wanted to embody the feeling of working towards a goal, having it torn to shreds, repeat, finish, and forgetting about it, all within the metaphor of a videogame.

Three Perpetual States is a short set of solo piano miniatures that briefly explore different uses of harmonic language, while also examining certain states of mentality that seem to go on almost to the point of permanence. The first miniature is a study of the interval of a perfect fourth, making use of it almost entirely throughout the movement. The second begins with an ethereal, major-based texture and gradually descends into conflict and dissonance, ending at the opposite end of the piano keyboard with a muddy texture, contrasting the beginning of the movement and changing the mood from dream-like to rage after the disruption of such a peaceful musical setting. The third section is a quirky representation of a scenario in which one entertains thoughts that have suddenly lost so much meaning, it is as if apathy has asked you to dance. Also, a big "Thank you!" to Abby for taking on the challenging and time-consuming project of learning and performing these miniatures.

I began writing **Litany** at the end of a rather dark time. (It was first written in 2009 and then revised in 2012-13.) As I sat down to write for the first time after a rather unproductive spell, the plainchant melody Dies Irae seemed to lodge itself in my mind and crowd out all other musical ideas. The result was a musical journey that traverses a range of moods while maintaining the same obsessive melodic focus throughout.

I wrote **Shadows and Light** for Jeff, who I first meet in the UTSO a few years ago. The first time we meet he told me something I said was stupid—I think

about some bowing (?) Needless to say I liked him right away. His gifts on the bass were obvious, and given his astute assessment of my predisposition to say stupid things we became fast friends.

Sometime later I talked to Jeff about writing a piece for him. I asked him what he was interested in for a new work, he said, something lyrical. Jeff has a big sound, one that could easily embody the dynamic range typically associated with a work for violin or cello. Moreover, bass has evolved quite dramatically over the past say, 30 years. The technical expectations upon bassists, and as such the dramatic/lyrical means available, open the door to new compositional possibilities for the instrument.

This work's title borrows its name from Joni Mitchell's Shadows and Light Band, that feature the bassist Jaco Pastorius, whose voice defined a generation of bassists, amongst whom I am one. Jaco died in 1987 but his influence is still felt today. Perhaps above all else it was his lyrical disposition, whether in a ballad or a funky tune, Jaco sang through the instrument. It is within this tradition I wrote this piece—Shadows and Light—for Jeff, and the next generation of bassists.

Sonatina for clarinet and piano was written in Toronto, Canada in the autumn of 2012. Although post-romantic in its harmonic language (e.g. The emphasized use of diatonicism), this piece is by no means programmatic. The structure of this piece is the standard miniature sonata form: exposition, development and recapitulation. The recapitulation is not a repetition of the exposition, however. It bears total contrast from its original form in terms of its style and mood. The exposition merely 'grew' organically into an entirely different character, implying the concept of flux.

Trembles is a short character piece portraying the brief moment of tranquility amidst the many, longer, more prominent moments of anxiety one might face in the course of a day where a single troubling thought or bad memory can play over and over and seem to constantly linger in the back of one's mind. The piece's highly motivic nature represents the idea of this reoccurring thought as it flows from the subconscious to the conscious state.

Trio for Piano, Violin and Horn consists of harmonic language rooted in popular music of Asia. It is a shame that not many composers write memorable melodies anymore and that art music since modernism is often hard to access for the average audience. In incorporating pop elements but classical techniques such as counterpoint, it is my wish to expand the territory of art music to include the pop style- the product of the core aesthetics of this era- pop culture. Therefore, this trio is my attempt of a "contemporary classical" piece that the audience will hopefully be able to connect with and easily understand; it is my attempt to write a piece that is genuinely derived from the contemporary culture and to introduce such music from the Far East to the Western classical realm in a familiar form.

We, the Composition Students, would like to extend a special thanks to the following -our teachers and mentors- for all their hard work in making this event possible. In no particular order:

Professors Mark Sallmen, Alexander 'Sasha' Rapport, Chan Ka Nin, Gary Kulesha, Christos Hatzis, Ryan McClelland, Dennis Patrick, Norbert Palej, and Roger Bergs, Larysa Kuzmenko, Abigail Richardson, Eric Robertson, James Rolfe.

We would also like to thank Peter Olsen for recording our music and making it sound beautiful.



.....Fin